

VZCZCXR06734

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHZN
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTL #0802 3541424
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 201424Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY TALLINN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0398
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0051
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0037
RUEHZN/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS TALLINN 000802

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [KV](#) [BK](#) [EN](#)
SUBJECT: ESTONIA: PARLIAMENT EXTENDS MANDATES FOR IRAQ,
AFGHANISTAN AND KOSOVO.

REF: TALLINN 693

¶1. (U) On December 19, the 101 member Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) voted to extend the mandate for the Estonian troop deployment in Iraq by 12 months (until December 31, 2008). 53 MPs voted in favor of the bill, which followed quickly on the heels of the December 18 UNSC vote to extend the mandate of the multinational forces in Iraq. Most MPs from the ruling coalition (Reform, IRL and Social Democrats) voted in favor of the bill while members of the opposition (Center, Greens and People's Union) primarily voted against or did not vote at all. The Speaker of Parliament signed the bill into law at the same session.

¶2. (SBU) Parliament's approval re-authorizes up to 40 troops to participate in the mission. At the moment Estonia has a total of 38 military personnel serving in Iraq. 34 infantry troops (ESTPLA-16) are assigned to the U.S. 1st Calvary Division near Baghdad and 4 staff officers serve at the headquarters of the multinational brigade and in the NATO training mission.

¶3. (SBU) At a holiday reception just before debate on the Iraq bill began in the Parliament, Prime Minister Ansip underscored his strong support for Estonia's role in Iraq and made a point of telling Ambassador that Estonia would 'stand by the United States all over the world.'

¶4. (U) During the month of December, the Riigikogu also voted to extend the mandates for Estonian troop participation in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (all until December 31, 2008). The extension of the Afghanistan mission (69 votes in favor, none opposed) continued authorization for the participation of up to 150 Estonian soldiers in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The bill on Bosnia and Herzegovina (74 votes in favor, none opposed) allows for the participation of 5 soldiers in the regional peace keeping operation. This is a decrease in the size of the allowed contingent from 35 to 5. However, it more accurately reflects the actual number of troops Estonia has deployed on the ground (3 since June). The Kosovo bill (80 votes in favor, none opposed) re-authorized the deployment of up to 40 troops with the NATO-led KFOR force. Finally, this month, the Parliament also approved the participation of 55 Estonian troops in the EU Nordic Battle Group (81 votes in favor, none opposed). (Note: The final decision on whether and where the force will be deployed is made by the European Council. End Note).

PHILLIPS